

# The Arlington Advocate



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56 PAGES • 3 SECTIONS

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## Settlement explored in case of fired officers

### Kelly, McGurl subject of negotiations with mediator

BY DAN SHOHL  
STAFF WRITER

Attorneys for the Madigan family, the town, and fired Arlington police officers Jennifer McGurl and Daniel Kelly will meet with a mediator in the coming weeks to discuss the possibility of a three-way settlement, one that might include the return of McGurl and Kelly to duty with the Arlington police.

Kelly and McGurl were fired on July 27 following disciplinary hearings in Town Hall, in which town attorneys argued that the officers had tried to cover up for the actions of Richard Jenkins, a former Arlington police officer, following a reported "peeping tom" incident at the Madigan home in 1997. The attorneys asserted that McGurl and Kelly initially attempted to hide the fact that they encountered Jenkins while investigating the incident and conveyed him to his home town of Medford.

Attorneys for Kelly and McGurl had argued that their clients did not receive a fair hearing at Town Hall and that nothing the officers did inhibited the successful prosecution and subsequent firing of Jenkins. They said the officers acted within the bounds of allowable police discretion during the night in question.

Jenkins was ultimately convicted of being a disorderly person and filing a false stolen-vehicle report. He served a three-month jail term.

An attorney for the Madigan family last year put the town on notice that the family intends to sue the town and a half-dozen of its employees for civil rights violations and emotional stress resulting from the Jenkins incident.

The two officers immediately appealed the firings to the state Civil Service Commission in Boston. The hearing for that appeal had been set for the end of this month, but attorneys for the town and the officers have asked the commission to postpone the hearing while a settlement is discussed. Such a settlement would remove the need for an appeal.

Based on discussions with people close to the case who asked not to be identified, there are costs and benefits to all sides if a settlement is reached. The Madigans might not get the award they would if they pursued their civil rights claim, though they would avoid the cost and emotional strain of lengthy court battles.

The town might re-employ two officers it asserted were liars and unfit to hold the public trust, though it might still negotiate a significant punishment. It would avoid its own legal costs and the liability of a

***'If there is a possibility the town of Arlington can move on and put this unhappy episode behind us, we should explore that possibility, without any preconditions by anybody.'***

TOWN COUNSEL JOHN MAHER

civil rights judgment against the municipality and a half-dozen current and former town employees, including Kelly and McGurl. The town might also close an issue that has balkanized and demoralized its police department.

McGurl and Kelly might receive vindication and return to their jobs, but accept a lesser but still-significant punishment.

"No one loses anything by making the effort [to settle]," said Town Counsel John Maher. "The town has not rescinded the terminations. [Kelly and McGurl] have not compromised their appeal rights. The Madigans have not waived any claims they intend to assert."

Maher said Monday that a mediator has not yet been chosen. A date for the three-way meeting has not been set, though he said the attorneys were looking at Jan. 26, the original date set for the Civil Service appeal.

The fact that the mediator's meeting is in the works might mean a short period of détente between Arlington Patrolmen's Association and Town Hall. The union has organized several protests on the steps of Town Hall, deriding the firings as capricious and unfair. Smaller rallies have also been held at the intersection of Pleasant Street and Massachusetts Avenue. The association had planned a protest for McGurl and Kelly for the steps of Town Hall Monday evening, right before a meeting of the Board of Selectmen. That rally was postponed at the end of last week after word of the upcoming mediation filtered down.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, several town employees said having McGurl and Kelly return would not happen unless both officers accepted total responsibility for inappropriate actions and received stiff suspensions. A few of those asked doubted that a settlement could actually be hammered out to the satisfaction of all sides.

"If there is a possibility the town of Arlington can move on and put this unhappy episode behind us, we should explore that possibility, without any preconditions by anybody," said Maher.

## Sunrise clears hurdle

BY LES G. MASTERSON  
STAFF WRITER

Though some audience members dismissed Sunrise Development's assisted-living proposal as too pricey for local residents, the Redevelopment Board unanimously approved the Wellesley-based firm's Environmental Design Review Monday.

The proposal calls for 85 units at 1395 Massachusetts Ave., currently a Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority parking lot. The plan has come under attack by Arlington Heights business leaders, who are concerned that a new building will eliminate crucial parking spaces. Affordable housing advocates are also worried that the development will not help Arlington residents.

Harry Barber of the town's Assisted-living Task Force said officials must think of the human aspect rather than concentrating on the design's nuts and bolts. Barber added that he would like 10 to 15 percent of the units to be set aside as affordable, targeted for Arlington's middle class population.

"That's what I would be happy with... I would like to see the corporation have a little more heart," said Barber.

John Noone of Sunrise Development said the company plans on building different size units,

■ SEE SUNRISE, PAGE 8

### A WINTER'S TALE



George McKewen walks on the bike path on a sunny chilly day last weekend. Arlington still has not received any measurable snow this season.

STAFF PHOTO BY LISA CASSIDY

## Town may acquire Water Street parcel

BY DAN SHOHL AND  
LES G. MASTERSON  
STAFF WRITERS

Fearing that the FleetBoston building at 30 Water St. might be redeveloped as office space, Selectman Charles Lyons is looking at ways that the town could acquire the property.

EPOCH Senior Living, an assisted-living developer, had been expected to buy and develop the old office site in the heart of Arlington Center. Last month,

talks between EPOCH and the bank ended without a sale. A preliminary EPOCH proposal had called for an assisted-living building with approximately 100 apartments, and it had been seen by many residents and planners as a good fit for the neighborhood.

Meeting Saturday morning, the town's Affordable Housing Task Force heard a rumor from David Whitford, a Water Street resident, who said at least one commercial developer was interested in the

■ SEE WATER STREET, PAGE 8

## King events spotlight Civil Rights movement

BY LES G. MASTERSON  
STAFF WRITER

A handful of hate graffiti incidents in Arlington over the past few months served as a grim reminder that Dr. Martin Luther King's dream has not yet been realized. In a community so focused on diversity and welcoming of newcomers, the incidents served as a black eye.

But, on Monday, residents will come together and remember a man whose work has been an inspiration for millions, including countless Arlingtonians.

The 11th annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Observance will take place Monday at the First Baptist Church, 819 Massachusetts Ave. There will be a potluck dinner at 6 p.m. and a program commemorating King's life and work at 7:30 p.m.

It is a real opportunity to show that there is respect for everyone in Arlington from all different faith, ethnic, and racial backgrounds," said Judi Paradis, who helped organize the event. "It's a celebration of what Dr. King tried to promote."

Those attending the dinner are asked to bring a casserole or dessert for six adults. The program after the dinner includes a speech by Judge Marjory A. German, an Arlington resident and judge of the Suffolk County Juvenile Court. German also managed and administered a large community public defender office. In addition, German taught courses in black history in the Arlington schools and participated in forums in the Boston schools.

■ SEE KING, PAGE 21

## Town, state officials investigate oil leak at the Stratton School

BY DAN SHOHL  
STAFF WRITER

Town contractors are working to clean up a heating-oil leak that seeped from Stratton Elementary School and into the surrounding environment, according to the state Department of Environmental Protection and Arlington town officials.

The leak was discovered Jan. 3, when landscaper Robert Lalicata reported an oily sheen in a ditch on Ryder Street and called the fire department.

Firefighters were sent and began applying booms and absorbent pads to contain and clean the substance, at that time unidentified. Dept. Chief Steve Porciello, who used to work for a heating-oil company, began investigating the surrounding streets. Porciello's eyes and nose told him the substance was probably heating oil.

"Originally they thought somebody dumped some fuel oil down one of the storm drains," said Richard Maimone, director of Arlington's fire department.

Unable to locate a source for the leak, the deputy chief made a report to the DEP, which sent its own employee to investigate the same day.

Victor Fonkem, the DEP investigator, sampled the slick and determined that the

sheen was in fact heating oil, a viscous type used to warm buildings larger than the average home. On Monday, the investigator had traced the source back to the Stratton Elementary School, 180 Mountain Ave. Also that day, the fire department laid out additional booms to gather any oil that might flow during that evening's rainstorm.

The underground tank at Stratton can hold up to 10,000 gallons of fuel. The town had topped it off several days before New Year's Eve, as the school had been selected as a town shelter in anticipation of any civil disruptions related to the Y2K computer bug.

As of Tuesday, the volume, the elapsed time and the area of the leak was unknown, though Ferson and Maimone said the oil did not seep into the nearest downslope stream. "It didn't get into Mill Brook," said Ferson.

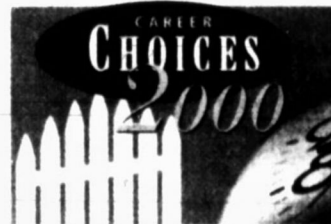
He added that the exact source of the leak, whether it is Stratton's underground fuel tank or a connecting fuel line, was also unknown.

Since the school is municipal property, responsibility for cleaning up the oil and fixing the leak rests with the town.

Since the beginning of the week, a Wake-

■ SEE OIL SPILL, PAGE 8

### INSIDE



#### Potpouri

The Gentle Wind Project will introduce a new instrument of healing at a Bedford seminar this month.

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STAFF PHOTO BY ELLEN BULLOCK

Brad Stoll (on top of tank) and Kevin McInnis of Petroleum Management install a temporary oil tank at the Stratton School Tuesday afternoon. A heating-oil leak seeped from the school and state and town officials are now working on the clean up.



# FOR THE RECORD

## POLICE LOG

Selections from the Arlington police log for the week of Jan. 3-9:

### Monday, Jan. 3

• At 8:36 p.m., police received a report of a fight among five young men at Hurd Field. During the fight, one of the youths smashed the window of a 1996 Mitsubishi Gallant.

• At 8:45 p.m., police were called to a University Road home for a reported physical fight between a husband and wife. Both declined police assistance.

### Tuesday, Jan. 4

• At 11:21 a.m., the management at the Hogdon-Noyes car dealership on Massachusetts Avenue reported key-scratch vandalism to four news cars on its lot.

### Wednesday, Jan. 5

• At 11:25 a.m., Arlington police received a report from their counterparts in Lowell that a car reported stolen by an Arlington resident had been recovered.

• At 1:24 p.m., police were called to Webster Street to mediate a landlord-tenant dispute.

• At 9:29 p.m., police were called to a Massachusetts Avenue address to escort an unwanted person to the Cambridge town line.

### Thursday, Jan. 6

• At 8:21 p.m., police were sent to a Morris Street home to serve a restraining order to a man. Finding that the man appeared to be drunk, police took him into protective custody and transported him to the Community Safety Building, 112 Mystic St.

### Friday, Jan. 7

• At 2:35 p.m., the management at the Hogdon-Noyes car dealership on Massachusetts Avenue reported key-scratch van-

dalism to four additional news cars on its lot.

• At 2:59 p.m., police were called to settle a fight at Nicola Pizza House, 1215 Massachusetts Ave.

• At 7:05 p.m., police at Park Terrace took an intoxicated man into protective custody and transported him to the Community Safety Building, 112 Mystic St.

• At 7:29 p.m., a resident of Henderson Street reported that a 24-inch girl's bicycle had been stolen some time the previous evening.

### Saturday, Jan. 8

• At 3:22 a.m., police on Gardner Street took a homeless, intoxicated man into protective cus-

tody and transported him to the Community Safety Building.

• At 12:21 p.m., police received a report of a break-in at Sun's Chinese Kitchen, 90 Lowell St. The burglars reportedly forced open a rear door and stole \$1,000 in cash as well as beef, shrimp, and chicken.

• At 5:09 p.m., the driver of a 1992 Geo parked at a Water Street parking lot reported that the windshield of the car had been damaged some time that afternoon.

• At 6:36 p.m., a Pond Lane resident reported that someone had unsuccessfully tried to force entry into the passenger side of a 1993 Chevrolet Blazer.

### Sunday, Jan. 9

• At 4:45 a.m., a Gardner Street woman reported that someone had entered her home through a kitchen window and stole two wallets, paper towels, and a full bottle of vodka from the refrigerator. The wallets — missing cash and credit cards — were recovered near the house, as well as an empty vodka bottle found in the street.

• At 8 a.m., an Alpine Street resident reported that his/her windshield had been broken by a flying object while driving eastbound on Route 2.

• At 3:11 p.m., a Pleasant Street resident reported the theft of \$400 in cash from a home safe.

• At 7:18 p.m., a Gardner Street resident reported that the house had been vandalized with graffiti.

• At 11:48 p.m., police were called to a Mystic Street residence for the reported theft of a Black & Decker toaster oven from a hallway.



## ARRESTS

The following is the arrest log for Arlington's police department for the week of Jan. 3-10.

### Monday, Jan. 3

• At 9:36 a.m., police arrested Lauren R. D'Onofrio, 35, of 46 Fremont St., following a traffic stop on Broadway. D'Onofrio was taken into custody for having an outstanding warrant issued for allegedly driving with a suspended license and not providing a license when requested. The arresting officer was Officer Robert Hughes.

### Wednesday, Jan. 5

• At 7 p.m., police arrested Eric M. Geribo, 18, of 255 Forest

St. at his home. According to police reports, a woman reported that a young man had pulled up next to her car while both were stopped at a traffic light. While stopped, the woman said that the young man made eye contact with her, then pulled down his pants and began to fondle his genitals. The woman reported that the man then followed her for a while after the light changed. She wrote down the man's license plate number on her hand and called police. After ascertaining the owner, police were sent to Geribo's home, where they questioned him. Geribo told police he had been retrieving his pager from

his belt while at the stop light and denied that he exposed himself. After the questioning, he was arrested and charged with open and gross lewdness. The arresting officer was Officer Richard Flynn.

### Monday, Dec. 10

• At 1:25 a.m., police arrested Michael Mark Edwards, 18, of 56A Montague St. Edwards was arrested after he was observed driving with two other people on Broadway. A background check returned an outstanding warrant for being a minor in possession of or transporting alcohol. The arresting officer was Officer James Fitzpatrick.

## MEETINGS

### Tuesday, Jan. 18

• Permanent Town Building Committee meets at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Hall annex, 21 Academy St.

• Arlington Housing Authority's board of commissioners meets at 6:30 p.m. in the Community Room of Winslow Tower, 4 Winslow St.

• Vision 2020's environmental subcommittee for Spy Pond meets at 7:30 p.m. in the second-floor meeting room of the Town Hall annex.

### Wednesday, Jan. 19

• Finance Committee meets at 7:30 p.m. in the second-floor meeting room of Community Safety Building, 112 Mystic St.

### Thursday, Jan. 20

• Council on Aging's Finance Subcommittee meets at 6:45 p.m. at Arlington Senior Center, 27 Maple St. A meeting of the full council will take place immediately thereafter, scheduled for 7:15 p.m.

### Monday, Jan. 24

• Finance Committee meets at 7:30 p.m. in the second-floor meeting room of Community Safety Building.

### Tuesday, Jan. 25

• Arlington School Committee's Safety Task Force meets at 6:30 p.m. in the committee's sixth-floor hearing room at Arlington High School, 869 Massachusetts Ave. A meeting of the full committee will follow at 7:30 p.m.

## THE ARLINGTON ADVOCATE

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### • NEWSROOM

If you have a news story idea, a letter to the editor, obituary, a question about news coverage, or to submit an arts, education or a social news item, contact Les Masterson the editor for The Arlington Advocate.

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## FIRE LOG

From the incident reports from Arlington's fire department for the week of Jan. 3-9. During that period, the department responded to 65 calls, including 34 rescues, 10 investigations, and four "alarms of fire." References in this digest to "paramedics" denote two-medical teams from Armstrong Ambulance Services, a private Arlington-based ambulance company.

### Monday, Jan. 3

• At 9:22 a.m., firefighters and paramedics were sent to an Inverness Road home for a 42-year-old woman having a diabetic reaction. The woman was conscious. She was given oxygen and glucose and transported with the paramedics to Lahey Clinic in Burlington.

• At 12:19 p.m., firefighters were sent to Forest Street for a car fire in a 1992 Buick Century. The fire started from an alternator that had reportedly been installed the day before. The fire was quickly extinguished.

• At 1:20 p.m., firefighters were called for a contamination of an "oil-like" substance coming from a catch-basin on Ryder Street. Fire crews used absorbent pads and other methods to contain the leak and notified the state Department of Environmental Protection. The DEP sent its own crew and a contractor to evaluate the spill and clean it.

### Tuesday, Jan. 4

• At 8:51 a.m., firefighters were called to Thompson School on North Union Street after they received a report of a burning odor in the school kitchen. Firefighters found an over-heated ventilation motor in a crawlspace above the kitchen. There was no fire. The motor was shut down and building maintenance personnel notified.

• At 1:06 p.m., firefighters were sent to the loading area for Lahey at Arlington (formerly Symmes Hospital and Medical Center) on Hospital Road for a truck leaking diesel fuel. Firefighters cleaned some of the spill with absorbent compounds and told the driver to have the truck towed from the lot.

### Wednesday, Jan. 5

• At 8:41 a.m., firefighters were

sent to a Pleasant Street home for a woman who had reportedly slipped outside and complained of extreme pain in her right knee. Her leg was placed in traction, ice applied to her knee, and she was taken to Lahey Clinic.

• At 5:40 p.m., firefighters were sent to Germaine Lawrence School, 3 Park Avenue Ext., for a stove fire started from food accidentally left on a burner.

### Thursday, Jan. 6

• At 2:02 p.m., rescue and paramedics were sent to Whittemore Street for a 48-year-old man having a diabetic reaction. He was found semi-conscious on his bed and taken with paramedics to Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston.

• At 4:15 p.m., firefighters were sent to a Clark Street home after the resident reported smelling natural gas. The house was ventilated and a Boston Gas repair crew summoned.

### Friday, Jan. 7

• At 12:34 a.m., rescue and paramedic crews were sent for a 47-year-old Grafton Street man who had stopped a police officer to say that he was possibly having an allergic reaction to chocolate. Firefighters noted that he had some swelling about his face. He was taken to Lawrence Memorial Hospital in Medford.

• At 4:37 a.m., firefighters and a rescue team were sent to 60 Lowell Street for a two-car accident. A 42-year-old man reported that he had been struck from behind and complained of pain in his neck and back. He was immobilized by EMTs and taken to Somerville Hospital.

• At 12:25 p.m., firefighters were sent to an Elvern Road residence for a fire in the engine compartment of a 1998 Chevrolet.

### Saturday, Jan. 8

• At 11:02 a.m., an Arlington rescue team and EMTs from Armstrong Ambulance Services were sent to the bike path near the Water Street municipal parking lot for a two-year-old girl who had fallen on the pavement. The girl had a small laceration on her head. She was taken to Winchester Hospital.

## Correction

An article in the Jan. 6 edition of *The Advocate* ("Police investigate two New Year's bomb threats," page 3) should have reported that phoning in bomb threats is a felony in this state, punishable by up to 20 years in state prison.

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# Alewife activists receive set back

BY DAN SHOHL  
STAFF WRITER

Environmental activists in Arlington, Belmont and Cambridge received a setback last month in their drive to turn a Cambridge parking lot into a wetland.

An "informal" opinion written by Assistant Attorney General James Milkey, chief of the AG's environmental protection division, appears to weaken a Constitutional approach that residents are pressing to remove the lot.

The land in question covers slightly more than five acres behind the Alewife MBTA station that has been used as a parking lot for decades.

This summer, the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) voted to issue a one-year renewable lease of the lot to AP Cambridge Partners, a real estate development company composed of O'Neill Properties Group and Prudential Real Estate Investors.

That permit concerns local officials and activists who want to turn the parking lot into a wetland.

Neighborhood activists in Cambridge, Arlington and Belmont — organized into The Coalition for Alewife — have been hammering away at the MDC for issuing the lease. The primary reason, according to its mem-

bers, is that the lot is on public park land and sits in a drainage area for Alewife Brook, prone to flooding during heavy rains. Such flooding exacerbates storm-water problems for parts of East Arlington and Belmont, they say.

Further, members of the Coalition for Alewife have said the permit runs afoul of the 97th article of the state Constitution, which reads in part, "lands and easements taken or acquired for [environmental protection] shall not be used for other purposes or otherwise disposed of except by laws enacted by a two-thirds vote [of the Legislature]."

The coalition has made a Constitutional appeal a centerpiece of its drive to reverse the MDC's decision.

Citing statute and case law, Milkey, in his written opinion, said the MDC did not run afoul of the Constitution.

"A transfer in ownership can ... trigger a [vote of the Legislature], but only so long as the property interest being transferred rises at least to the level of an easement," wrote Milkey. "A temporary-use permit does not do so."

"For this reason, regardless of whether the MDC's decision to issue the permit was wise public policy, we do not believe that [the Constitution] required a super-majority vote

by the Legislature before the MDC issued a permit."

Milkey's letter was a definitive answer for Arlington Town Counsel John Maher, who said that the attorney general appears confident of the permit's legitimacy.

"To me, it's a definitive response from the AG on what he's intending or not intending to do," said Maher. "He's told us he does not intend to pursue it."

Selectman William Monahan of Belmont has been one of the active opponents of the MDC permit. He and state Rep. Anne Paulsen, D-Belmont, dismissed Milkey's opinion and said the attorney general needs to dig a little deeper into the particulars of this case and issue a more authoritative answer.

"I think we need to move forward to receive a more formal opinion from the attorney general," said Monahan.

Paulsen represents both Arlington and Belmont. She said the "temporary" permit the MDC has been re-issuing for decades is de facto a permanent permit and should therefore be subject to a vote of the Legislature.

"How long can you have a temporary license and keep it temporary?" she said. "It does not appear that this license has been tested."

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## Millennium Charity Ball transforms Town Hall

"Who could have believed our Town Hall could be transformed like this! Congratulations, Arlington!" This was just one of many similar sentiments expressed in the guest book from Arlington's New Year's Eve Millennium Charity Ball, held on Dec. 31 in the Robbins Memorial Town Hall.

Guests entered Town Hall on a red carpet bordered with white lights. Once inside the front foyer, they were greeted by members of the committee and directed to one of two coatrooms ably attended by six charming teenagers. The foyer soon filled with the warmth and chatter of women dressed in satin and velvet and men in tuxedos, ready to usher in the New Year in grand style.

The hallways were bathed in soft lights, bedecked with flowers and balloon bouquets. Guests could choose from a selection of appetizers presented on tables covered in gold lame. Yards of blue gossamer, speckled with gold stars, covered archways and framed windows. The two display cases in the front foyer made for

fascinating reading; they presented a tableau of *The Arlington Advocate* front pages, dating from 1900 through the present.

Once entering the ballroom, guests were delighted to see the intricately carved ceiling aglow in blue and gold light. Beneath the ceiling, six arches spanned from balcony to balcony in glittering gold, sapphire blue and white balloons. Hanging above the tables were two seven-foot stars of gold balloons, poised to drop at midnight.

The tables sparkled with china and silver, centerpieces of blue delphinium, white roses, and candles. Hats, noisemakers, and a gift of the Menotomy Indian fashioned in pewter, wrapped in gold, adorned every place setting. Blue gossamer and balloons draped the balcony from one end to another. Two sets of carpeted stairs had been added to the front of the stage, which was festooned with lighted flower boxes. The backdrop of the stage shone the light of a wintry evening sky — it was covered with over 2,000 sparkling lights twinkling through yards of gos-

samer. It truly was a "Starry Starry Night."

Guests mingled, enjoyed the hot hors d'oeuvres service, met old friends and new and, at the moment the band finished their last tuning, couples took to the stage in front of the ballroom for their first dance. The party had begun.

For the next five hours the celebrating never stopped. Two dance floors provided space for those who wanted to stay on ground level and those who wanted to trip the light fantastic closer to the stars by ascending the stairs to the stage. The band played a wide variety of music, offering songs from the early 1900s through the 1990s. Even as dinner was being served, some intrepid couples stole away from their tables to waltz or lindy or rock.

As midnight drew near, a giant screen was moved onto the stage and the telecast of New Year's Eve in New York City was projected. Guests gathered around their tables, champagne in hand, confetti wands poised, noisemakers tuned and the energy in the room was palpable.

When the ball dropped in Times Square, the two balloon stars overhead opened and four hundred gold balloons fluttered to the floor. Robbins Memorial Town Hall rocked. Through the strains of Auld Lang Syne, couples kissed, friends hugged friends both old and new, and the 228 guests of the first New Year's Eve Charity Ball welcomed in the year 2000. Another guest reflected, "An amazing — artistic — overwhelming — once-in-a-lifetime or 100-or-so event!"

Dancing continued until 1 a.m. The first day of the new millennium had arrived. And from the guest book, "There's no place I'd rather be than in Arlington Town Hall for the millennium. Fantastic night. let's do it again next year."

As a result of the Charity Ball, the Dollars for Scholars program will realize a \$10,000 permanent scholarship graciously donated by the Mirak family. And no less than \$5,000 will be placed in the general scholarship fund.

The preceding was submitted by the Millennium Celebration Committee.

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## Forum focuses on town manager search

Arlington residents are invited to a public, three-hour forum on Feb. 26, held to gather citizen input on as the Board of Selectmen prepare to hire a new town manager.

Town Manager Donald Marquis will retire in November of this year, and work has begun to find a replacement for the man

who has held Arlington's chief executive position for 33 years. A professional management consultant, The PAR Group of Lake Bluff, Ill., has been retained by the town to conduct a national search. A special citizen advisory committee has been formed to help define the search profile and vet the preliminary round of candidates.

Both parties will hold a Town Hall forum for residents to add their input to the town manager search. The forum will run from 1-4 p.m. Feb. 26 at the Town Hall auditorium, 730 Massachusetts Ave. Additional forums might follow. For more information, contact the Board of Selectmen's office in Town Hall, 316-2020.




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# Wanted: A person with fire in the belly

BY DAN SHOHL  
STAFF WRITER

More than anything else, the push to increase affordable housing in Arlington requires a dedicated champion seeking out property and funding, according to one expert in the field.

Robert Murray, a former Arlington resident, elected official and businessman, spoke at a Saturday meeting of the town's Affordable Housing Task Force. He related his experiences building up the stock of affordable home in Barnstable County, where he now resides.

More than anything else, said Murray, affordable housing needs a vigorous advocate who would be willing to cajole bankers, find homes on the market that could be acquired for low- and middle-income family, arrange fundraisers, and basically make the goal happen.

"The one thing you need to ask yourself: Is there somebody in the community who has the fire in the belly?" he said. "If you don't, it won't work."

Murray said one of the best tools for building up the affordable housing stock was a non-profit organization like Arlington Housing Corporation. That organization could be nimble enough

to buy houses for resale or lease at affordable rates.

Neal Margold, the current chairman of Arlington Housing Corp., said that until recently, his non-profit has been focusing on offering subsidized classes on house purchasing to first-time homebuyers. He said the program has had the undesired effect of preparing people to buy houses outside of town.

"We've been increasingly successful in exporting low- and middle-income people out of Arlington," he said.

"That wouldn't have been my first action," said Murray.

"What you were doing, necessary as it may be, wasn't sexy," he said. "A community will respond to a human need if you can articulate the need and demonstrate that it's real."

Margold welcomed the advice, but said the corporation would need to find the "fire in the belly" person who could commit the time to make it work.

Murray said a properly directed program should be able to gather its own momentum without a lot of direction from Town Hall. He added many of the funding questions would answer themselves as housing programs are pursued, and he pushed his point with a double negative.

"You should never not do anything because of money," he said. "There's an unbelievable amount of financial resources [out there]."

"The ultimate goal is to take more housing out of the hands of profiteers and [put it] into the hands of non-profits," said Murray.

Selectmen Charles Lyons, who chairs the task force, said he wanted to bring Murray on as a paid consultant as the task force develops its recommendations to Town Meeting. He agreed with Murray that Arlington should not look to setting up extra town departments as a way to build up affordable housing.

"I don't want to blow the piggy bank on a bureaucracy," said Lyons.

During its four-hour meeting, the task force looked at a half-dozen proposals, large and small, including:

- Look into encouraging the construction of apartments above storefronts.

- Inclusionary zoning, a requirement that housing developers set aside part of their projects as affordable units. The town does have such a provision in its zoning code, but the provisions address such a dense development that they have never come

into play. The task force voted to place a revised zoning article before Town Meeting.

- Charge market rates for an Arlington-owned home at Mt. Gilboa, a prime piece of real estate whose rent could be dedicated to affordable-housing activities.

- Reach out to the town's clergy and churches for support and advice.

- Develop a fund-raising plan. Murray said that a Christmas mailing sent out by his corporation that highlighted four cases of need brought in \$33,000 in contributions.

- Catalog vacant parcels of land, held by both public and private entities.

Lyons said he would expect greater town funding for affordable housing from the Community Development Block Grant program, a federal appropriation that steers \$1.5 million into town coffers every year. The town has already set aside \$150,000 from the CDBG program for affordable housing, and Lyons said he would ask for \$300,000 in the next and subsequent years for the same purpose.

Affordable Housing Task Force will meet next at 7 p.m., Jan. 26, at a meeting place yet to be determined.

## Mt. Vernon residents report problems to Bento

BY DAN SHOHL  
STAFF WRITER

People living on Mt. Vernon Street and neighboring roads met Thursday with representatives of the town's Department of Public Works, including Director Richard Bento, to hash out the problems they've had with a DPW water-pipe replacement project in their neighborhood.

At least 60 resident and town officials met in the Town Hall auditorium to air lingering anxieties over the project, which replaced water mains beneath their street this fall.

Problems arose with periodic water failures, concerns about unsafe debris, gas-line breaks, and at least two major sewage back-ups thought to be related to the work. In addition, many people were surprised to learn they would have to replace the service pipes that run from the main water line to their houses. That replacement can cost at least \$1,000 and must be paid by the homeowner.

"The [DPW notification] memo said nothing about replacing the water line from the curb to the house," said John Brook, a Mt. Vernon resident who presented the bulk of the problems.

Several people also said they were not comfortable with repairs made to pipes that were punctured during the project. Bento said all of the sewer main lines will be visually inspected by snaking a flexible video camera through the pipes before the street receives a permanent repaving in the spring.

"If there are any inadequate repairs, they will show up when we TV the line," he said.

He also urged anyone who saw what they thought was a bad repair to notify the DPW and point out the spot.

"If you've observed shoddy work... we want to know about it," he said.

Another Mt. Vernon resident, Mary Nolan, presented a list of actions the town needed to take for this and future projects, including better notification

with more lead time, repair or reimbursement for project-related damage, inspection of sewer line repairs and better coordination with Boston Gas or its contractor.

"I ask on behalf of all of us that you learn from this experience," said Nolan.

Bento agreed that there needed to be more robust communication between the DPW and residents abutting public-works projects. He said future notifications would contain more information and that the department would host pre-project meetings with residents in the future.

He said that any damage to homes caused by the project would be compensated.

"There's no resistance on our part to pay," he said.

"I don't think any of those [requests] were unreasonable," said Bento. "There was definitely a communication problem."

Nolan credited Selectman Diane Mahon and George Laite, an aide to state Sen. Robert Havern, D-Arlington, with helping to organize the Jan. 6 forum. Both were in attendance.

Bento also said the DPW did not expect the construction problems it experienced at the Mt. Vernon part of the pipe project. The department has recently finished similar work in East Arlington, without hitting the same technical difficulties. The East Arlington pipes were generally in better condition, he said, and the soil and rock beneath the street easier to manage.

He did warn that pipe project would probably run into similar difficulties as it starts on other Arlington Heights streets, which have pipes of similar condition laid in the same rocky ground.

The next streets scheduled for the \$600,000 water-main project are Fountain Road, Buena Vista Road, Murray Street, Pine Ridge Road, Robbins Road, and Cedar Avenue. The work will run through next spring.

After that, the next phase will include Scituate Street, Newport Street, Iroquois Road, Bonad Road, and Shawnee Road. That phase will begin in the spring.

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# Peirce community provides ideas for possible new school

BY DAN SHOHL  
STAFF WRITER

Parents and neighbors of Peirce Elementary School got their first taste of what a new Peirce might look like on Jan. 5, as architects presented their first sketches for a reconstructed school and asked for input.

Meredith Strout, an architect with the Newton firm of Drumme, Roseane & Anderson, presented the firm's first two sketches, one showing a new school with a similar layout to the current one, and a second, more radical departure. The second option re-orientates the main axis of the school parallel to Blossom Street, and builds four ascending floors that would step into the hill instead of the current, stacked three.

"We wanted to get some direction and hear your concerns about the building site," she said to a full audience at the auditorium of Peirce, 85 Park Avenue East.

The 75-year-old Peirce will be reconstructed, along with the Dallin, Stratton and Thompson elementary schools, if the multi-million dollar project is approved by Town Meeting and

voters at a special election this spring.

Parents emphasized a need for after-school meeting space for children and residents, windows that can open, a cleaner auditorium design, and architectural unity with the surrounding area.

Either design creates a bigger school, one that can accommodate 300 students instead of the current 225.

"Classroom sizes will be somewhat similar [to the current layout]," said Strout. "We think we can improve storage."

Both designs include common features, such as:

- The school would be entirely handicap-accessible

- There are provisions for computers in every classroom with a dedicated computer lab the size of a classroom.

- Air-conditioning infrastructure, including vents and duct work, is in place, though it remains to be seen if air-conditioning will be put in as part of the reconstruction.

Strout also earned points when she suggested the new Peirce could have a school entrance on its north end. More than one parent said they did

not like the eastside entrance, which brings children through a loading area that is sometimes not cleared before the school day starts.

The four-deck option would also require that a line of large oak trees on Park Avenue would have to be cut down. The landscaping team said these trees have entered their "second half-life" and might best be removed.

At least one parent said that while she liked the trees, she was worried about the danger of falling limbs. Another suggested the architects seek design inspiration from the Agassiz School in Cambridge.

School Superintendent Kathleen Donovan said all of the comments offered at the Jan. 5 forum had been recorded and would be part of ongoing discussions with the architects. Additional meetings will take place with the public and school staff as the designs are refined.

"This is not the last design," said Donovan, who also made a pitch for the special funding election on April 1.

"I know you've waited a long time," she said to the audience. "We need you to work hard for the debt exclusion."

# Connelly named new Rec super

BY DAN SHOHL  
STAFF WRITER

Town Manager Donald Marquis has selected a new superintendent for Arlington's Recreation Department.

Joseph Connelly, 29, currently the administrator of recreation for the town of Reading, will become Arlington's superintendent of recreation starting Jan. 18.

Connelly, a native of Reading, is currently a resident of Windham, N.H., where he also serves on the town Recreation Committee. He replaces outgoing Superintendent Deborah Hayes, who has held the top job for the past 10 years and announced her retirement in November.

"Arlington has always had just a tremendous reputation for its athletic and recreation programs," said Connelly. "I'm really

excited about the opportunity; I can tell you that."

Connelly holds bachelor's and master's degrees from Springfield College, the latter a degree in athletic administration. Though relatively young, he started his director's job in Reading a day after receiving his master's.

"I pretty much took over a floundering recreation department here," he said.

While in Reading, a town roughly half the size of Arlington, he oversaw more than 200 programs and 26 full-time employees and volunteers. Like Arlington, Reading funds its recreation program entirely through user fees. Connelly managed a budget of \$250,000, again roughly half the size of Arlington's.

In 1998, Connelly also temporarily took over Reading's planning department while still keep-

ing his recreation job.

"The manager asked for an interim director," he said. He expected to keep that post for a month. "That month period ending up being nine months."

Connelly will be responsible for managing and scheduling the use of town recreational facilities and fields, running recreation programs for all ages, and acting as a liaison with local sports organizations and youth groups.

"The more you use a field, the more maintenance it demands," he said. "It really becomes a scheduling issue and maintenance issue. Arlington operates pretty much as we do in Reading."

He said next week's move is the right one for him.

"For a little while I've been looking to move to a bigger department," he said. "This was exactly what I was looking for."

# MediaOne holding public workshop

As MediaOne's local cable studio nears completion at 85 Park Ave., the company is planning a public workshop in cable television production to any interested residents at 5 p.m., Jan. 20, at the studio.

Mark Apostolon, MediaOne's local access coordinator for Arlington, will teach the workshop, which will explore the basics of shooting television stories and programs with portable cameras.

Apostolon asks that people who intend to take part call ahead of time so he can gauge demand and plan a second session, if necessary. He can be reached at 781-777-1115.

# Event celebrates differences, promotes unity

On Thursday evening, Jan. 27, the Faculty Dining room of Arlington High School will come to life in a new way as members from the high school community come together to share food and celebrate the differences and the unity of the community.

Guest speaker Janice Jackson of Boston College will lead the discussion, "Knowing ourselves so that we may better understand others." Jackson is a specialist in educational leadership and conflict resolution. She is currently on the faculty at Boston College School of Education. Her previous

positions include deputy superintendent for Boston Public Schools, and director of the Office for Black Catholics with the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, Wisc.

Members of the high school community, including family and friends, are invited to come to this potluck dinner and share a dish that serves at least four additional people. The dinner starts at 7 p.m. and the group discussion will begin promptly at 7:45 p.m.

This event is co-sponsored by Arlington High School's Vision 2020 student group, the AHS International Club, Vision 2020

Diversity Task Group, Metco, and Peer Mediation, and is enthusiastically supported by AHS Principal Charles McCarthy and Superintendent of Schools Kathleen Donovan. For more information, to R.S.V.P., or to hear snow cancellation information, please call Charlotte Milan at (781) 646-3738.

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## BOARD OF SELECTMEN NOTES

Monday night's meeting of the Board of Selectmen in Town Hall, with board members Kathleen Kiely Dias, Jack Hurd, Diane Mahon, and Kevin Greeley in attendance. Hurd excused himself halfway through the meeting, citing a family commitment.

• Town Manager Donald Marquis reported that he was preparing a Town Meeting article to fund the development of a comprehensive traffic management plan. Marquis estimated that the plan would cost between \$75,000 and \$100,000 to develop.

Fred Ryan, director of the police department, emphasized that the plan would not be just a grand traffic study, but a transportation plan with specific recommendations on how to manage traffic issues on a town-wide

basis. He said much of the data the study would use would come from the police department's own traffic-monitoring activities.

"We're not recreating the wheel here," said Ryan.

• Marquis reported that two long-awaited documents had arrived from the state for the Summer Street reconstruction project funded by Massachusetts Highway Department. Marquis said that the state has waived road-widening requirements for the project, which covers the western half of Summer Street. The town also received a reimbursement agreement that will cover the design costs the town has incurred.

The timeline for that project has scheduled design, review, public outreach, and permitting

for most of this year.

• The selectmen heard complaints about commercial truck traffic on Paul Revere Road by resident Janet Mahoney. The selectmen asked police Director Fred Ryan to further study the flow of traffic and commercial vehicles through several Arlington Heights streets that meet Massachusetts Avenue. Mahon at one point said the town should consider redesigning the recently-reconstructed Arlington Heights intersection at Massachusetts and Park avenues.

• The board voted to add morning commute traffic restrictions for Elmhurst Road and several connecting streets.

• The board approved a time-specific one-way sign for a section of Acton Street.

• The board voted to call a Special Town Meeting to take place during this spring's annual Town Meeting. The "special" is being held to vote on funding for the reconstruction of the Peirce and Dallin elementary schools.

Members of the Permanent Town Building Committee asked for the special meeting to assure that a vote would be taken before this year's deadline passes for state funding applications. The annual Town Meeting begins April 24. The Special Town Meeting will begin at the start of the following session on April 26.

• The board received a letter from Joseph Nocera of The Chateau restaurant, 645 Massachusetts Ave., responding to a notice from Town Counsel John Maher. Maher wrote to the restaurant after Dias reported a violation of town rules governing liquor service. Nocera said that he intended that The Chateau would abide by all town liquor violations. The board accepted the letter and said no further action would be necessary.

"I thought the response quite satisfactory," said Maher to the board.

Compiled by Staff Writer Dan Shohl



Cub Scout Pack 305 recently collected more than 1,000 food items for the Arlington Food Pantry.

## Scouts collect for pantry

Cub Scout Pack 305 recently completed its Scouting for Food drive, collecting and delivering more than 1,000 food items to the Arlington Food Pantry. Scouts asked neighbors to donate food items and then delivered them together to the Food Pantry. Food pantry volunteers were overjoyed with the boys' efforts.

The food drive was very successful and the scouts enjoyed a sense of giving to others less fortunate than themselves.

This community spirit was continued this week as the scouts

collected warm winter clothing to be donated to children at the New England Home for Little Wanderers. Each scout family brought gloves, hats and socks to the December pack meeting at Stratton School. Close to 100 items were collected. Pack leaders will deliver the clothing to the home.

Pack 305 meets at the Stratton School and has been serving the community for over 30 years. More than 80 boys from all over Arlington are active in this program.

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## Legislation affects widows

State legislators recently enacted legislation that provided eligibility to un-married spouses of certain deceased veterans, a \$1500

annuity award.

For applications and information contact Arlington veteran's agent John Collins at 316-3166.

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## AHS orientation

Arlington High School Principal Charles McCarthy announces that the annual Orientation Meeting for incoming Grade 9 students (currently Grade 8 students), is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 19, in the Lowe Auditorium of the high school. Mr. Vincent D'Antona, director of Guidance, will host the meeting. Speakers include a representative from Minuteman High School of Science and Technol-

ogy and Arlington High School Principal Charles McCarthy. Also present will be various Arlington High School departmental administrators. Discussion revolves around the general characteristics of the high school and course selection procedure for those students attending AHS in Sept. 2000. The meeting will end formally at 9 p.m., but school personnel will remain to answer any questions.

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## COUNCIL ON AGING NOTES

## Grandparent support group

A monthly support group for grandparents actively involved in raising their grandchildren will meet from noon to 1:30 p.m., today, Jan. 13 at the Arlington Youth Consultation Center, 670R Mass Ave., Arlington. For information call Lourie at (781) 316-3410.

## Free assistance with tax returns

Trained volunteers in the Tax Aide Program are available to help seniors with tax returns from Feb. 8 to April 13. Volunteers will also go to the homes of housebound seniors. Appointments must be made by Wednesday for the following week. Call Susan Isbell at (781) 316-3404, between the hours of 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. Appointments are available as follows: Monday, 9 to noon, Fox Library; Tuesday, 1 to 4 p.m., Robbins Library; Wednesday, 9 a.m. to noon, Robbins Library; 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Council on Aging; Thursday, 9 a.m. to noon, Robbins Library.

## Muscle strengthening class

Muscle strengthening classes begin 10:15 to 11:15 a.m., Friday, Feb. 4 in the Senior Center function room. The class is designed to strengthen muscles and bones, improve balance and prevent osteoporosis. \$3. Call (781) 316-3400 to register.

## Podiatry clinic

Podiatrists will provide an examination of the

feet, nail cutting, and minor treatment of foot ailments on Monday, Feb. 14: \$20. Call Marge Garrigan at (781) 316-3400 for an appointment.

## Caregiver support group

A support and networking group, for caregivers who have a loved one suffering from a long-term illness will meet 10:15 to 11:45 a.m. on the first and third Tuesdays of the month. Call (781) 316-3400.

## Eating Together menu

Call Barbara Ketlak, (781) 316-3423 for reservations and transportation to the Senior Center luncheon site, 27 Maple St., or Dawn Pepe, (781) 648-7500 for the Drake Village site, Hauser Building, 37 Drake Village Road. Donation of \$1.75 is requested; menus are subject to change.

Monday, Jan. 27: Holiday

Tuesday, Jan. 18: Swedish meatballs w/sauce, vegetables, peaches.

Wednesday, Jan. 19: Soup, Pier 17 fish, rice, fruited jello, HDM: stewed tomatoes; Alt.: veal patty w/gravy.

Thursday, Jan. 20: Veal roulade w/gravy, vegetables, apple crisp, juice.

Friday, Jan. 21: Baked chicken breast, vegetables, banana pudding.

## MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

## Week of Jan. 17

## Monday

No school.

## Tuesday

Broccoli and pasta Alfredo, garlic bread, Caesar salad.

## Wednesday

Salisbury steak, gravy, mashed potatoes, stir fry veggies.

## Thursday

Meat ravioli, tomato sauce, garlic bread, tossed salad.

## Friday

Bacon, lettuce and tomato roll up sand-

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wiches, sun chips, grapes.

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melon; turkey roll up sandwich, pasta salad.

## Thursday

Tuna salad roll, sun chips, Snackwell treat: fresh fruit salad, yogurt, cheese, multigrain roll.

## Friday

BBQ pork ribs, mashed potatoes, corn, applesauce; toasted cheese sandwich, sun chips, salad.

Alternatives: Monday: chicken nuggets w/dipping sauce, rice; Tuesday: cheeseburger, potato puffs; Wednesday: hot dog, rice; Thursday: chicken nuggets w/dipping sauce, rice; Friday: calzone, rice, veggie sticks.

Fruit, vegetable, bread and milk served with every meal.

## ELEMENTARY

## Monday

No school.

## Tuesday

Stuffed crust pizza, tossed salad, juice bar; tossed salad w/egg, yogurt, multigrain bread.

## Wednesday

Pasta w/meatsauce, bread stick, fresh

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# Officials investigate oil spill at Stratton

■ OIL SPILL, FROM PAGE 1

The DEP has assigned a state-certified environmental engineer to advise and review the town's work.

"Once we have knowledge of a [contaminant] release, that starts the clock ticking," said Ferson. "The site has to be remediated within a year."

Mammone said the seeped oil does not represent a fire hazard.

"There's no risk of that at all,"

he said. "It's not volatile like gasoline. To my knowledge, there are no health risks or public-safety problems."

Ferson said the spill would not threaten water service to nearby homes.

"Arlington is on MWRA [water supply], so there is no public well supply in that area," said Ferson.

"Underground storage tanks do leak, unfortunately, all the time," he said. "[The extent of the spill] remains to be seen. It happens all the time, and [contractors] do clean them up fairly quickly in most cases."

Mammone said if the leak is coming from the tank itself, the school will have to either replace it or install a natural-gas fired heating system.

# Winter Activities in the Fells

The new year brings a new calendar of Winter Activities in the Middlesex Fells. Thirty-two activities are scheduled for the season and all are free and open to the public. A brochure includes programs sponsored by both The Friends of The Middlesex Fells Reservation and the MDC. For a free Program Calendar, call the Friends at 781-662-2340 or visit web site [www.fells.org](http://www.fells.org).

Outdoor activities are varied. Easy, moderate and difficult walks and hikes provide an invigorating enjoyment of the Fells. There is also a snowshoe program for hearty souls. Other programs have an educational focus such as a geology walk for everyone, with two knowledgeable and amiable-geologists. There is an animal tracking program led by an interpretive naturalist who recently concluded a Fells' mammal survey. An outdoor night program, always popular, on amphibian migration will provide a look at this fascinating natural event.

The MDC is sponsoring four indoor programs for youngsters to be held at the Botume House Visitors Center in Stoneham. The work of a Ranger, snow, winter wildlife and bluebird boxes will be explored.

The Friends, an all volunteer association, work to protect this beautiful regional forest which adjoins Malden, Medford, Melrose, Stoneham and Winchester. Working with the Metropolitan District Commission, the Friends inform the public of the natural, cultural and recreational features of the Fells, a unique 2,000-acre natural treasure in an urban setting. The Fells is a beautiful place to recreate, to observe and to "connect" with our natural environment. It is diverse with rocky hills, meadows, wetlands, oak and hemlock forests, quiet ponds, vernal pools, panoramic vistas and important geological features. It is yours to appreciate, so come and enjoy it.

# Two companies interested in Water Street

■ WATER STREET, FROM PAGE 1

turning the site into an office park.

The task force is chaired by Lyons and charged with exploring ways to increase affordable housing in Arlington. The group sees attracting assisted-living apartments as part of that strategy, as Arlington seniors who move to assisted-living buildings vacate homes that could be purchased by a non-profit housing corporation and resold to low- and middle-income families.

"We'd like that to be a residential parcel," said Whitford of the Water Street building. "We were very keen on assisted living."

Acting on that report at the urging of Lyons, the task force voted to place an article before Town Meeting this spring. The article will ask that the town acquire the property by any one of several methods, including taking the property by eminent domain.

Lyons, as he whipped up the idea Saturday morning, framed it in tactical terms. Making a Town Meeting issue out of what has been a commercial matter affords public officials more leverage to advocate for senior and affordable housing.

"[It says] we are now a player in the

debate," he said.

According to Whitford, FleetBoston has a suitor in William Rowe, a local architect and developer whose office is walking distance from the FleetBoston property. Asked Monday if he were planning to buy and develop the parcel as an office building, Rowe did not say "yes" and did not say "no."

"We're always interested in property," he said. "We wouldn't do anything too aggressive without sitting down with the neighbors first."

"I haven't had any serious musings [about buying it]," he added. "[The building] has a lot of history, it affects a lot of people, and has to be done in a way that has as much comity as possible."

Assisted-living on Water Street might very well still come to pass. Town Planning Director Alan McClellan said two different assisted-living development companies have approached him about the Water Street site. In addition, he said there have been inquiries about developing it as office space.

McClellan said there is no timetable for the bank to sell it, but he believes FleetBoston (formerly BankBoston), would like to rid

themselves of the parcel. Fleet is still paying taxes on the property though the building is vacant, he said.

"I think Fleet is anxious to sell this property," he said. "They've been anxious the past two years. They negotiated [with EPOCH] for over a year and they feel it was a wasted year."

According to McClellan, Fleet is still committed to housing at the site, especially assisted-living.

Having Arlington actually take or buy the prime property would be a major undertaking at an unknown cost. Assuming it ever goes to a vote of Town Meeting and gets approved, the acquisition could be done in a number of ways.

"We could approach the owners of the property and ask them to give it to us, [sign a] lease agreement, purchase it, take it by eminent domain, any number of ways," said Town Counsel John Maher, who is drafting the Town Meeting measures for the selectmen's review.

"I would be interested to see what the town's reaction would be to Mr. Lyons' suggestion to purchasing the property," said Rowe.

# Sunrise assisted-living plan clears first hurdle

■ SUNRISE, FROM PAGE 1

which will allow more affordable opportunities. However, Noone said he would not be "reckless" and commit to setting aside affordable units as Barber suggested.

"At this time, it is not feasible for us," he said of the latter idea. "We believe [the existing proposal] is affordable to the majority of people in Arlington."

Redevelopment Board member Barry Faulkner said the board does not have the authority to insist upon affordable units.

Noone also dismissed critics by saying the new assisted-living center is a better use than the current parking lot. He acknowledged that the project is an "expensive" one for the company because of the site's "deplorable conditions."

Nevertheless, Sunrise did make some minor changes to its plans, including decreasing the height of the proposed building from 52 to 49 feet and changing the entrance to the merchants' lot.

That three-foot reduction will help with the much-discussed shadow of Dec. 21. Sunrise's studies show that for the worst case scenario at 3 p.m. Dec. 21, there would still be a shadow on a neighboring garage, but the effect will not be as great as under the previous 52-foot proposal.

In fact, Sunrise officials claim that any shadow around that time has more to do with the lack of

sunlight than the proposed building height.

Since the shadow is only a worst case scenario and would not affect residents in the summer, Faulkner said he did not see any problem with it.

After talking to the land's owner, the MBTA, Sunrise agreed to make a change regarding access. Instead of using the bus turnaround lot for an entrance into the merchants' lot, Sunrise agreed to have a separate gated entrance for that lot.

Some Heights residents are concerned what the proposal will mean for parking spaces. Planning and Development Director Alan McClellan said his research counting cars and running license plates showed that eight area residents used the MBTA parking lot for parking.

But McClellan said there is a way that residents could still have access.

"If merchants are going to have passes and go through the gate and the majority of businesses in the heights are from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., then the lot is not

going to be used at night [by merchants]. It seems to me that the developer, the town, and the chamber of commerce could come up with a way to issue passes to residents of Paul Revere Road. [The residents'] concern is parking at night when there is no business activity... There could be joint usage," McClellan said, adding that he counted 20 to 23 cars parked overnight in the lot.

While the merchants' lot, which includes 35 spaces, would be to the right of the proposed development, Sunrise would use a parking lot to the left of the proposed structure. Responding to a question from the board, Noone said Sunrise would not share those spaces with merchants or residents.

Sunrise will post signs informing drivers that the spaces are only for employees or visitors.

"We like to know who is on the property. We are able to tell when people come and go," said Noone of the security issue of having a lot devoted solely to the facility.

Heights theme


Many have been impressed with the revitalization project in the Heights and Redevelopment Board members said they would like to see Sunrise continue the Heights' theme. Board member Nora Mann said Sunrise could bring that feel down to their structure by using similar lamp posts and landscaping.

Noone agreed to replace the three cobra lights in front of the proposed structure with ones more conducive to the Heights.

"We want to complement the area. We don't want to stick out," he said.

Though Sunrise cleared this hurdle, there are still a few more coming. Officials from the assisted-living facility will have to appear before the Redevelopment Board again when 50 percent and 100 percent of the design work is completed; the Conservation Commission because of the proximity to the Mill Brook and because of regulations stemming from the Rivers Protection Act; and the Board of Selectmen for the proposed "bump out" and crosswalk. A "bump out" is when a road becomes narrower, which causes traffic to slow down, and can also be a place for benches and bus stops.

If Sunrise does not have any issues during the rest of the process, McClellan said he still does not expect any work at the site until at least June.



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## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Brackett PTO events

The Brackett PTO's Cultural Enrichment Committee is pleased to sponsor two events this month.

On Tuesday, Jan. 18, Jason Russell House staffer Lisa Welter will present a program on colonial times to fifth grade students. A school-wide assembly on Wednesday, Jan. 26 will feature actor and poet David Zucker.

Each year the Cultural Enrichment Committee works with teachers in each grade to identify an artist, theater group, speaker, field visit or other special event that will compliment the curriculum and interests of students in that grade. All events are sponsored by the PTO.

### Election workers sought

Arlington Town Hall seeks residents serve as paid election workers for this calendar year.

There are four different job classes to fill. There is a warden, the chief

election officer at the polling area who is charged with maintaining an orderly voting process, posting the proper materials, enforcing election laws and preventing interference with the voting process. There is a clerk, who keeps a record of the proceedings as required by law. There are inspectors, who assist voters with balloting, check their names off the voting rolls as they arrive, and proceed their completed ballots. Then there are relief workers, who fill in as needed throughout a polling day.

Each voting precinct must have a warden, a clerk and four inspectors, plus relief workers as needed. Arlington is divided into 21 precincts.

The next town election will be held on April 1.

Wardens are paid \$100 a day, clerks get \$90 and inspectors receive \$80. Relief workers are paid \$7.50 per hour.

Interested people should call the Board of Selectmen's office, 316-3020.

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## ARTS

## Extolling the virtues of the banjo

## Resident writes about 'America's Instrument'

BY KAREN L. BOUVIER  
CORRESPONDENT

When you want genuine music — music that will come right home to you like a bad quarter, suffuse your system like strychnine whisky, go right through you like Brandreth's pills, ramify your whole constitution like the measles, and break out on your hide like the pin-feather pimples on a pickled goose-when you want all this — invoke the glory-beaming banjo.

Mark Twain wrote that long-winded sentence extolling the virtues of America's very own five-stringed folk instrument in 1865 but Arlington resident James Bollman revived Twain's words when he used them on the first page of his recently published book "America's Instrument: The Banjo in the Nineteenth Century."

Bollman's 300-page book is an exhaustive illustrated history that charts the evolution of the banjo from its primitive folk origins through its rise to the very pinnacle of American popular culture at the turn of the twentieth century and again in the bluegrass music explosion of the 1940s. Along with co-author Philip Gura, an English and American studies professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Bollman offers unparalleled insight into the music business in 19th century America and shines light on the omnipresent position of the banjo in American music.

"Here's more than you ever

thought you wanted to know about the banjo," Bollman said of the book. "I simply wanted to share the knowledge I've accumulated and publish the research I've spent the better part of a lifetime conducting."

Throughout his childhood, growing up in Lancaster, Penn., Bollman grew to love playing piano, guitar, and finally banjo.

"I liked the way the banjo looked," he said of his original interest in the instrument.

Although he went to college to study economics and then joined the family hat making business, Bollman knew his calling lay elsewhere. Groomed into a family business he says he found unsatisfying, he began to dabble in a long time interest, buying and selling antiques.

"Which might explain why I liked the way the banjo looked," he quipped of the instrument often thought of as antiquated.

His combined interest in antiques and instruments led Bollman to begin researching and collecting banjos in earnest. His love of music eventually drove him to the Boston area in 1974 where, in collaboration with several friends, he opened Music Emporium.

Music Emporium, which moved four years ago from Porter Square to Mass Ave just over the Lexington line, has provided Bollman a vocational outlet for the hobby he loves. He has been researching banjos and related ephemera for more than 30 years, and the 57-year-old "confirmed bachelor" says he's held a long time desire to publish his wealth of information. He even hopes to one day open a banjo museum.

"Why do I love old stuff like antiques and dead music?" Boll-

man asked rhetorically. "Maybe it's in reaction to modern life that doesn't appeal to me like the commercialization and mass marketing of absolutely everything, with no regard for aesthetic appeal and hand crafting. I'm no cultural anthropologist," he adds, "but maybe the revival of the banjo periodically throughout American history — specifically the 40s bluegrass and the 60s folk revivals — is society reacting to modern life. We want to go back to roots and we're looking for traditions from the past. You see that folksy tradition creeping back into music again now, and there's a limited interest in non-commercial music, including the banjo."

Bollman should know. He plays banjo and ukulele in an old time band that has been plucking out southern and rural American fiddling tunes since 1984. The band, Roustabout, is a fixture at old time fiddle conventions and festivals, and they recently released a CD, "Better Than It Sounds," which is named after a play on words used by none other than Mark Twain.

Although the band is based in DC, Bollman — who with rusty blond wisps of feathered hair, a beard and mustache, and a pair of John Lennon spectacles, looks a bit like Stephen Stills of Crosby, Stills, and Nash fame — plays with the band at least once a month. His involvement with Roustabout, in part, paved the path to Bollman's new book.

"The banjo community is still small," Bollman said, "so we all know each other for the most part, and it's a wonderfully diverse community, with farmers and PhDs coming together with common interests." And through the music

***'The banjo community is still small so we all know each other for the most part, and it's a wonderfully diverse community, with farmers and PhDs coming together with common interests.'***

JAMES BOLLMAN, WHO WROTE "AMERICA'S INSTRUMENT: THE BANJO IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY"

and festivals, banjo connoisseur Bollman met Ph.D. Gura.

Gura, who is a banjo and old time music enthusiast as well as a college professor, published a book in 1994 about guitar manufacturing, for which Bollman assisted with various tidbits of knowledge and information from ephemera for which he is the sole proprietor. Gura's book was a springboard to the duo's book, "America's Instrument: The Banjo in the Nineteenth Century."

"We needed each other to do this book," Bollman says. "As an instrument dealer, a lot of stuff has gone through my hands and as a collector I have a lot of information." And Gura? In addition to playing an instrumental role in the writing of the new book, Gura saw the work to publication through the University of North Carolina Press.

The book, and Roustabout's CD, are available over the Internet at Amazon.com as well as at Borders bookstores and some specialty stores, including Music Emporium.

## Poetry and prose on tap this month

On Thursday, Jan. 20, writers Mark Schafer and Mary Terrell will read selections from their latest works at the Community Room of the Robbins Library, 700 Massachusetts Ave. Admission is free and wheelchair accessible.

Mark Schafer is a literary translator with five books and numerous other publications to his name. His most recent book, "Stripping Away the Sorrows of This World," a translation of stories by Mexican author Jesus Gardea, was published by S. A. Mercury House in 1998. Other translations include "Mogador" by Alberto Ruy Sanchez (City

Lights Publishers) and "The Book of Embraces" by Eduardo Galeano. Schafer has also published numerous articles and essays on Latin American poetry and in 1995 won the Robert Fitzgerald Translation Prize from Boston University. Schafer has also been an interpreter for Centro Presente, and the manager of the Wesleyan University Press Poetry Program. He received his master of arts in Hispanic Studies from Boston University.

Mary Terrell began writing poetry in the 1960s while attending poetry workshops taught by poet and writer, Ontonne Riccio.

Recently, her first book of poetry, "Place of Vision and Dreams," selected poems written from 1980-1990, was published (Cottage Press under the Heritage House imprint). Terrell's poems have also appeared in the *Lincoln Journal*. Since retiring from a career in health care, she is able to write full time, focusing on poetry, fiction, nonfiction articles and a biography on the life and work of Dr. Martha May Elliot, a leader and pioneer in the field of maternal and child health. Currently, Mary Terrell is a participant in the Visiting Scholars Program at Brandeis University, Women's Studies Program.

## NOTES

The Arlington Center for the Arts winter session begins Jan. 25 with classes for adults, seniors, families, and children. New offerings for the winter term include: Imaginative Color in Pastel, Thursday, 7 to 9:30 p.m.; Artistic Adventures, Thursday, 12 to 3 p.m.; Contemporary Mosaics, Thursday, 7 to 9:30 p.m.; Photo Fun, Wednesday, 7 to 9:30 p.m.; and Basic Bookmaking Techniques, Monday, 7 to 9 p.m. Papermaking Intensive, Saturday, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., is open for all skill levels. There are three watercolor class options, Beginning Watercolor Expression, Wednesday, 7 to 9:30 p.m.; New Techniques in Watercolor, Monday, 7 to 9:30 p.m.; and a new daytime class, Drawing and Watercolor Methods, Monday, 12 to 2:30 p.m.

For those interested in drawing the human figure there is Figure Drawing, Tuesday, 7 to 9 p.m. For students of three-dimensional art there are Clay Arts, Tuesday, 12 to 3 p.m., and Beginning with Metals — Silver Jewelry, Tuesday, 7 to 9:30 p.m. Learning from the Masters: Painting and the Museum Experience, Monday, 7 to 9:30 p.m., is a class for painters who wish to explore the philosophies and methods of master artists. Painting Technique Studio, Wednesday, 6:45 to 9:30 p.m. provides art instruction for beginning and returning students in both contemporary and traditional art materials and methods. A continuing favorite, Yoga for Health and the Creative Mind, resumes Friday, 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Two courses especially for seniors, held at the Senior Center, are Studio Arts, Monday, 9:30 a.m. to noon, and Creative Writing, Wednesday, 10:30 a.m. to noon. Writing class possibilities for adults at the Arts Center include: Writing Your Memoir, Monday, 7 to 9 p.m.; Writing the Fiction of Desire, Tuesday, 7 to 9 p.m.; and Writing Poetry, Thursday, 7 to 9 p.m.

For family Friday nights, the Arts Center continues The Culture Club, Art Night for Parents & Children (ages 5-13 and parent), 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., with featured art projects to include: Valentine Gifts and Cards, ArlCtrArts@aol.com.

Perky Personalities, Pottery, Treasures from Egypt, and Fetishes from Around the World.

New offerings for children include: The Art of Domino Physics, Monday, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. (ages 8-11); Developing the Eye, Wednesday, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. (ages 9-12); and

## ARLINGTON CENTER FOR THE Arts

Want to Paint on Everything?

Tuesday, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. (ages 8-11) Art Explorers, Thursday, 3:30 to 5 p.m. (ages 6-8); Ancient Art Secrets, Friday, 4 to 5:30 p.m. (ages 6-8); Creative Fingers: 3D Odyssey, Wednesday, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. (ages 8-11); and Comics & Cartooning, Monday, 3:30 to 5 p.m. (ages 8-10) and 5 to 6:30 p.m. (ages 11-13).

For children interested in three dimensional work there is Clay is the Way!!!, Tuesday, 3:30 to 5 p.m. (ages 7 to 9) and 5 to 6:30 p.m. (ages 10-13); and Woodworking, Thursday or Friday, 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. (ages 6-7), and 4:30 to 6 p.m. (ages 8-11).

In the performing arts the Art Center offers Improvisation and Performance, Friday, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. (ages 10-15) with experienced director Fileen Kell; and The O'Kays — Oppor-knockity Tunes Recording, Monday, 3:30 to 5 p.m. (ages 9-12) with auditions Jan. 16 led by Steve Cummings. Finally, in the literary arts there is Young Writers, Monday, 3:30 to 5 p.m. (ages 12-16) with Emily Taylor.

Special workshops and Saturday classes include: Print Studio weekdays, 9 a.m. 3 p.m. and Saturdays, 8 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. (per day or per month); Drum Day! — Family Event!, Saturday, Feb. 6, 1 to 3 p.m.; Strawberries, Chocolates & Cordials, A Special Valentine Art-Making Event will take place Friday, Feb. 12, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.; Beginning with Metals — Silver Jewelry, Tuesday 7 to 9:30 p.m.; and Papermaking Intensive, Saturday, March 6 and 13, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Teachers can earn Professional Development Points (POP's) for all Art Center classes. For information or to register, call the Arlington Center for the Arts (781) 648-6220, and our email address is ArlCtrArts@aol.com.

## Brackett School art on display

Artwork inspired by the book Snowden by Nancy Carlson is on display in the Robbins Library Children's Room during the month of January. The work depicts skaters, snowmen, children playing, and other characters from the Snowden book produced by fourth grade students using cut paper and markers under the direction of art teacher Sandy Goodman.

Parents, students, and friends are encouraged to come in and view this exhibit. Robbins Library exhibits artwork from Arlington elementary schools throughout the school year. This collaborative project is funded through a grant from the Russell Fund.

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## Depression Study

Dr. Jonathan Cole is conducting a research study at McLean Hospital in Belmont, Massachusetts to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of an extract of St. John's Wort in the treatment of major depression. This study is sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Individuals who are experiencing depressive symptoms may be eligible for this study.

Symptoms of clinical depression may include:  
• Sad, unhappy, empty, or helpless feelings • Sleep problems • Worthless or guilty feelings • Energy decrease, fatigue, or lack of motivation  
• Appetite changes • Loss of interest or pleasure in usual activities

For more information please contact Emily Rudominer at (617)855-2904 or e-mail: DOWNBLUE@mclean.org

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## COMMENT



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## EDITORIAL

## Ground rules for election

With less than a month before the last day to obtain blank nomination papers for the April 1 election, only a handful of candidates have made their trek to the Town Clerk's office and started the task of collecting signatures.

We hope many residents, including newcomers, get involved in town politics this year. For those who aren't familiar with the issues, a nice start is Town Meeting, which has served as a springboard to town-wide and state positions.

Here is a list of important dates for residents:

- Monday, Feb. 7 — Last day for Town Meeting members who are candidates for reelection to give written notice that they are running.
- Thursday, Feb. 10 — Last day for obtaining blank nomination papers.
- Monday, Feb. 14 — Last day for submitting all nomination papers to the registrars of voters for certification of signatures.
- Monday, Feb. 28 — Last day for filing nomination papers with the town clerk.
- Wednesday, March 1 — Last day for filing withdrawals of and/or objections to all nomination papers.
- Friday, March 10 — Last day to register voters for the town election.
- Saturday, April 1 — Annual Town Election.

The Advocate will continue to publish this list in the coming weeks.

For those who are new to the process, candidate nomination papers, excluding Town Meeting, must be signed by at least 50 voters. Meanwhile, those seeking a seat at Town Meeting must have at least 10 voters in their precinct sign the papers.

In addition to providing the information to the public, we also felt it was time to lay some ground rules for the upcoming election.

We will try to provide complete and even-handed coverage of the candidates and issues. As part of that plan, we ask your help in keeping letters and announcements concise and focused on the issues.

Candidates for town-wide office are welcome to submit a formal announcement and photograph. Please limit announcements to 500 words. As with letters to the editor, we reserve the right to edit announcements for length and clarity. The deadline for submitting announcements is March 6.

Letters from candidates or supporters will be considered for publication if they address specific campaign issues; letters should be 500 words or less and must include the writer's name, address, and phone number for verification. Letters will be published as space permits and we reserve the right to limit the number of letters on a subject and the frequency of letters written by individuals.

No letters of endorsement or letters that raise allegations or new charges against a candidate will be published in the issue immediately prior to an election, unless, in the editor's judgment, they are necessary to respond to claims made against the candidate and are limited to that response.

Readers are welcome to submit letters (also with a limit of 500 words) on issues raised during the campaign. If more readers' letters are received than can be published in any issue, we will try to publish a representative sampling.

With a debt exclusion on the ballot, *The Advocate* will also allow any political action committee registered for this referendum to submit an 800-word "Guest Opinion" for a future edition.

To be assured that items will go into that week's paper, we need candidates' and readers' political correspondence by noon on Monday of that week.

As always, *The Advocate* will allow its "Comment" pages to be a bulletin board for the community. However, we ask that you don't get personal in your letters. Mud-slinging does not help anyone.

The bell has sounded; now let's keep it clean.



## We must work together to undo racism

In 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial and stated "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." Unfortunately, 36 years later our nation has yet to fully achieve his dream.

Racism is still very much with us and is still a major barrier to the realization of the American dream. It is embedded and reproduced every day by what we do. It needs to be dismantled, unraveled, and purged. We need to challenge and change ourselves as well as our institutions. It is about how racism in America has fundamentally denied people of color power, access, equality, and opportunity.

It is time for all of us to own up to the fact that we don't treat people the same way, and more often than not it is because of the color of their skin. We must continue to build communities where equality and fairness are our guiding lights.

In a predominately white community like Arlington we need to address the following questions:

How are African Americans and other racial and ethnic groups treated in our town? Are they welcome? Would they want to live here? How easy is it for people of color to find housing and jobs in Arlington? What steps can Arlington take to make affordable housing a reality? What is the experience of people of color in dealing with local police? Do we have a policy on racial profiling — i.e. can people be arrested for "driving while black or brown?" Is our staff racially and culturally diverse? Has staff been trained in

**We too often regulate African Americans and members of other racial and ethnic groups to communities with inferior schools, restricted access to jobs, high levels of crime, and centralization of poverty.**

cultural competency so they can adequately serve our community? Are our schools and our town educating young people about the racial and cultural diversity of the world in which they live? To what extent do other town officials and I work with other communities in our region to promote equal opportunities for African Americans and members of other racial and ethnic groups?

I am committed to addressing these questions. We need to continue to be reminded that it took until the 1960s to enact the first effective national laws to combat racial discrimination, and it will take several generations to fully correct the problem.

According to the Council of Economic Advisers for the President's Initiative on Race, disparities like the following continue:

Non-Hispanic white children score higher than non-Hispanic black or Hispanic children in both reading proficiency and mathematics proficiency at all ages. In 1995 Non-Hispanic whites (35 percent) are more than twice likely as non-Hispanic blacks and Hispanics (less than 15 percent) to have completed a college degree. The unemployment rate for blacks has been roughly twice the rate for whites for more than 20 years and the substantial gap in pay between whites and blacks changed little

between 1970 and 1990. The median income of black families as a percentage of non-Hispanic white family income was about the same in 1997 as it was in 1967, less than 60 percent. While over 70 percent of non-Hispanic white families own their own homes, less than half of non-Hispanic black and Hispanic households own their own homes. Racism is nowhere more apparent than in the radical segregation of where Americans live. On average, a non-Hispanic white residing in an American metropolitan area lives in a community that is about 85 percent white.

We too often regulate African Americans and members of other racial and ethnic groups to communities with inferior schools, restricted access to jobs, high levels of crime, and centralization of poverty. We then pass laws like three strikes and you're out, or give high school students comparison test to be used to deny access to future schooling and employment, or ride the popular wave to deny needy benefits to welfare recipients during the greatest economic period in American history.

It is time to Undo Racism and get past denial. We need to face the facts, show what it takes by modeling the kinds of personal behaviors and attitudes that will play a vital role in dismantling racism, make government part of the solution by building communities where fairness and equality of opportunity are the rule.

We also need to examine laws that divide us rather than unite us. Finally, we need to partner with groups both inside and outside of government to make antiracism initiatives a priority in our community, our region, and our country.

Charles Lyons is an Arlington selectman who this past year chaired the National League of Cities Advisory Council. The Advisory Council's 1999 Futures Report was entitled "Undoing Racism — Fairness and Justice in America's Cities and Towns."



CHARLES LYONS

## Do you feel like you've been hit by a truck?

Flu season is here — and if the President of the United States can get it, so can you. The best thing you can do to prevent the flu is to get a flu shot and no matter what anyone says, it's not too late.

By next year we are hoping to have a nasal spray available, which will hopefully be much easier (and certainly less painful) to administer. But, if, despite your best efforts to avoid the flu, you start feeling ill, there are ways to tell whether it's not just a cold but the "real thing."

Flu symptoms include fever, chills, severe muscle aches, and sometimes nausea and vomiting. The way to differentiate this from a cold or other viral respiratory infections is that the flu very rarely is characterized by runny nose, watery eyes, and the symptoms of a cold that everybody is familiar with. I tell my patients that you know you

have the flu when you feel like you've been hit by a truck.

The other tip-off is that you know it when you've got it — a cold can wear you down, but the flu knocks you for a loop and while you can struggle through the day with a cold, you cannot get out of bed — nor should you — when the flu hits you. In fact, you can also tell you're in the middle of a flu epidemic by just looking around you. Absences from businesses and schools go way up. That makes people more aware that there's a flu epidemic spreading through their area. Since so many others are also sick when (or if) they get it too they're already aware of what to do to deal with it.

What do you do if you should be unlucky enough to get the flu? First of all, don't fight it — the flu can be dangerous if you ignore it. Don't go to work — you'll just endanger your co-workers anyway and you certainly won't be able to concentrate very well. Go to bed. Get lots of sleep. This will get you better more quickly and keep you from spreading the disease at work or school. People who "tough it out" aren't doing themselves or anyone else a favor. Plus, if you ignore

the flu, you could wind up with more serious (and dangerous) illnesses, including pneumonia.

If you do get the flu, you'll be encouraged to hear that there are new treatments, including new antiviral agents. One is called Relenza, which is inhaled, and the other is Tamiflu. These drugs claim to shorten the duration of the illness and minimize its symptoms. This is the first year we have had them, so the track record regarding effectiveness and side effects is a bit sketchy. They are quite expensive (around \$50 or more) and the HMOs have already said they won't pay for them. If you have asthma you should avoid Relenza since it can irritate your air passages. And, be aware that Tamiflu has around a 25 percent chance of nausea.

The infectious disease experts I talked to think these medications may be important under certain circumstances. If the infection is caught early — like within the first 24 to 48 hours — and before the fever breaks — then they might shorten the illness. People who have weak immune systems, (AIDS and cancer patients or other chronically ill patients on

drugs that can suppress the immune system) are also candidates for these medications. There are some older prescription drugs which may also be effective, such as Amantadine and Rimantadine (Flumadine) which help in influenza A but not B.

Seventy years ago, we had one of the worst flu epidemics in history. Six-hundred and seventy thousand Americans and 25 million around the world died of the flu, including my grandfather. It was one of the cruelest and most unexpected killers in that it took the young and the healthiest people in the prime of their lives from age 20 to 40. Many fathers and mothers died and those families were never the same. While medicine has come a long, long way since then and most cases of influenza are not fatal, this illness can still kill people if we ignore the symptoms or don't take care of ourselves once we get it. With the holidays and cold weather also comes flu season. You'll know if you have it. Call your doctor and, take good care of yourself.

Dr. Timothy J. Crowley is an Arlington resident and from Mount Auburn Hospital.



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